

A shepherd shares his vision

Bishop Kuzma's homily on the occasion of the ordination and enthronement of Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh Judson Procyk.

Your Excellency, Most Reverend Agostino Cacciavillan, apostolic pronuncio to the United States and personal representative of our Holy Father Pope John Paul II; Your Eminence, Metropolitan Judson, our newly consecrated brother; my brother bishops of the apostolic college, my brothers and sisters in the Lord:

The awesomeness of this day swells our entire being with hope and joy as we exclaim with the psalmist:

This is the day that the Lord has made, let us be glad and rejoice in it!

We rejoice and are glad because we have received a shepherd. He comes among us not as a hired hand, but as one sent by the good Shepherd himself. As our new Shepherd he comes into our midst to know us and to lead us to that same good Shepherd. He comes in the name of the Lord to care for his own and to call and welcome those who do not belong to this fold.

The Gospel passage of the good Shepherd emphasizes the command found at the end of Matthew's Gospel:

"Full authority has been given to Me both in heaven and on earth; go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you.

And know that I am with you always until the end of the world" (Mt 28:18-20).

The Apostles and disciples were on fire with love for Christ and his teaching. They became first and foremost evangelizers, that is they proclaimed the message of Jesus Christ to all the ends of the world - to Jew and Gentile; the interested and non interested, to friend and foe alike. They proclaimed the Gospel in their own unique way as they imitated the good Shepherd in seeking their own as well as those not of the chosen flock. As shepherds themselves they pastored

the souls won over to Christ. They celebrated with their flocks Christ's holy mysteries, adapting them to the customs and traditions of the people.

But even to these first shepherds, their glory in winning souls to Christ was tempered with much suffering at the hands of unbelievers, as well as those from within the community who were weak and broke their covenant with Christ. Like the good Shepherd himself, many were called to lay down



their lives willingly for their flocks.

The great apostles to the Slavs, Cyril and Methodius, left their Greek-speaking homeland and crossed into the Slavic lands. They learned the Slavic language and even developed a written alphabet so that the Gospel and Liturgy could be taught and read in the language of this people. In a meaningful way consonant with Slavic customs, they made adaptations to the liturgy that helped these people grasp

the meaning of Christ's message and its import upon their lives. Due to foreign intrigue and accusations of making too many adaptations, these great apostles were subjected to imprisonment, and misunderstanding and were finally vindicated in their evangelization of the Slavs.

Through the tensions and suspicions of schism and reunion our people remained faithful to the teachings of Christ in spite of a strong western influence. The migration of our people to the United States also saw that same fidelity to the Gospel while our liturgical tradition was latinized, resulting in the near destruction of the unique identity of our liturgy and our traditions. Being strangers in a foreign land and misunderstood even by other Catholics, our people rallied around their church and also found strength in their own ethnicity.

Although we were relatively young in this country, the Holy See gave us a hierarchy with the establishment of the Exarchate of Pittsburgh and Bishop Basil Takach as the First exarch in 1924. Arriving in this country with little knowledge of English and thrown into a chaotic situation, Bishop Takach organized this new ecclesiastical jurisdiction. As bishop he experienced great pain in the imposed celibacy upon our clergy by Rome as a result of a panicked Latin hierarchy. Flames of dissent became a raging inferno at the hands of agitators. He suffered greatly as new hatred arose and schism divided Christ's church - a schism that still affects many of our own lives. Bishop Takach and the faithful remnant suffered much because of their obedience and loyalty to

Christ and his vicar.

Bishop Daniel Ivancho became bishop after World War II. By this time our church was being filled with American-born faithful. He saw the influx of American vocations and the need for priestly formation under the guidance of the local bishop. Against the objections of many, he boldly built Ss. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary, a monument to his foresight and love for his church. This seminary still serves our church today. Unfortunately he suffered from the lack of support of his own priests, and because of personal difficulties, he was forced to resign as bishop.

Bishop Nicholas Elko succeeded Bishop Ivancho in 1954. Dynamic, but controversial, he too left his mark upon the church. Concerned about the young American Byzantine Catholics who yearned for a better and more full spiritual life, he authorized the use of English in the Liturgy. To tie the vast territory of the eparchy together, he established the *Byzantine Catholic World* newspaper to evangelize and spread the news of the church to her faithful. He did much to make the liturgical richness and spirituality of our church known to our Roman brothers and sisters. Although he did much for the church, the controversy surrounding him led to his removal from office.

Archbishop Stephen Kocisko entered Pittsburgh in the late 1960's and became the first archbishop in 1969. A father of the Second Vatican Council and a signer of its decrees including the *Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches*, which instructed the Eastern Churches to return to their authentic traditions, his 22 years as archbishop were spent calming the waters of change as the metropolia grew into four eparchies.

Archbishop Thomas Dolinay went west to establish a missionary eparchy and returned as archbishop bringing with him many grandiose ideas. His brief time as archbishop left his many ideas unfulfilled.

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Today, Archbishop Judson Procyk begins his ministry as third Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh. His name is added to the list of shepherds each of whom left his particular mark on our church. As we await his impact upon our church, he is not unknown to us. For we know him to be even tempered, self-controlled, and hospitable; he is a good teacher; he is gentle and approachable, a man of peace; he is a good manager, he is well thought of inside and outside the community. These are the same qualities that Paul the Apostle tells his spiritual son Timothy are necessary for a bishop of the church. These virtues, coupled with a faith that grows in the spirit of the Lord yielding a love and concern for all, reflect the image of the good Shepherd. They give strength to him whose Christ-given mission it is to teach, to sanctify and to lead this flock.

Today as we experience the cold and bleakness of the winter, we are cheered by the thought of the coming spring and the new life it brings. So also today does our church look to a new spring of life as we leave the long, cold, bleak winter. The new spring dawns today with the buds of new life for our American Byzantine Catholic Church as we move towards the 21st century. Our new spring begins at a time when we are eager to grow. If we miss this opportunity, we may very well plunge into the winter of stagnation and complacency that precedes death.

Serious challenges to our church — her hierarchs, clergy, religious and faithful — must be confronted if we are to experience this new spring.

The first challenge is to be an evangelizing church alive with the fervor of the first disciples of Christ. We can no longer consider ourselves to be an ethnic Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church, rather we must be an American Byzantine Catholic Church, loyal to the teachings of Christ and the universal church. While our ethnic ties may still be strongly rooted in Eastern Europe, there is a vast forest that separates our American Byzantine Catho-

lic Church from our Rusyn roots. We are called to be members of Christ's church. We must be open to preaching the Gospel to all peoples and welcom-

stituting the Catholic Church.

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ing them into our church, be they Hispanics, Asians, African-Americans or anyone that the Lord leads to our door. The Gospel is clear: Go and make disciples of all peoples!

The second challenge our church faces is to return to our authentic traditions as called for by the Second Vatican Council and our new Eastern code of canon law. Since the celebration of Christ's holy mysteries are at the center of our Christian life, we are called to review our liturgical life, to remove latinizations, and return to that which is our authentic worship. The rejuvenation of our liturgical life will foster

in the reality of ministering to our American Byzantine Catholics within the context of the world in which our people live. Also better utilization of the seminary and its staff for serious continuing education programs of a month or two in duration for our clergy and religious. The opening of our seminary to the seminarians of the other Eastern Catholic Churches as well as opening our seminary to laity for specialized theological and spirituality programs. Hopefully this would result in people alive with love and enthusiasm for Christ and his church who would willingly share this enthu-

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a closer union with the Lord and his word and result in a new spring of church renewal. We must move together as *one* church and not as individual eparchies as some of us have been forced to do. This leads us to seek a full implementation of the new code so that we may live more fully the life that we are entitled to live as a *sui iuris* church, one of the many churches con-

sisting with their brothers and sisters on every level of our church.

All challenges are painful to confront if we view them with human eyes devoid of faith. The men and women of faith view and accept the challenges with joy and act upon them because they see God's hand and experience his presence and guidance in the undertaking.

Metropolitan Judson, we look to you for leadership. We are a diverse people from varied places and experiences. We look to you for guidance, for strength, for a vision of church.

Though winter surrounds us we look to the spring for life that buds forth. We anticipate the spring—the new spring for our church where Christ will be preached, his holy mysteries celebrated and all peoples called to gather in his presence under your leadership. The awesomeness of this task can be overwhelming for one of little or no faith, but the Lord has seen your faith. The good Shepherd calls you forth to shepherd this flock, this church.

Be not afraid to preach the realities of the Gospel and to reflect Christ's presence to us. We will open our hearts to the Gospel and be touched by your example to live the Gospel more fully.

Be not afraid to sanctify us through the devote celebration of the holy mysteries. We will pray with and for you and our church, lifting you both up to the Lord.

Be not afraid to lead with the Shepherd's staff that gently nudges us to see Christ and the path we must follow. We will walk with and follow you to Christ.

We the Christian faithful — bishops, clergy, religious, laity — have gathered to support you in your new ministry and the many challenges to which the good Shepherd has called you. We promise to be your joy *not* your cross as you shepherd us. We will work with you to make our church strong through our faith-commitment to Jesus Christ.

How appropriate your episcopal motto is: *God is with us!* There can be no fear, but only strength if we acknowledge God's presence in our midst and are mindful of the Lord's presence with you, with us, as we strive to do his will until the end of time.

May Jesus the good Shepherd grant you peace, good health, and happiness for many blessed and spiritually fruitful years!